



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 8, 2005

Contact: Brook Williamson (619) 595-4645

COUNTY STEPS UP EFFORTS TO “FIGHT THE BITE” *Mosquito Breeding Season Here, West Nile Virus Is A Concern*

County officials are working to prevent the spread of West Nile virus (WNV) in San Diego County now that the mosquito season is here.

“The key to preventing West Nile virus is controlling the mosquito population,” said County Supervisor Greg Cox. “The County is actively treating mosquito breeding areas to reduce the potential spread of West Nile virus.”

Residents are encouraged to help with abatement efforts by eliminating standing water around their homes. “The County also is giving away mosquito-eating fish for residents to put in their inoperative pools or ponds,” said Gary Erbeck, director of the Department of Environmental Health. The mosquito-eating fish are available at 14 locations countywide.

People can reduce the risk of acquiring WNV by staying inside when mosquitoes are most active, and by wearing long sleeves and pants when outdoors, especially at dusk and dawn. County Public Health Officer, Dr. Nancy Bowen advises residents to use an insect repellant containing DEET when they have to be outside.

Horses and wild birds are particularly susceptible to WNV, however there is a vaccination available for horses through veterinary offices, according to Dr. Nikos Gurfield, County Veterinarian. There are no vaccines available for any other animals. Most wild and domestic animals, including cats and dogs, rarely develop clinical signs of WNV.

Nationwide last year, there were 2,470 human cases of West Nile virus and 88 deaths. Last year in San Diego County, two human cases of West Nile virus were diagnosed, however one case was determined to be acquired in the Port of Los Angeles and the origin of the other case was undetermined.

For more information about WNV, or to report dead birds or mosquito breeding areas, or find out where to pick up free mosquito-eating fish, call 1-888-551-INFO (4636) or visit

www.SDFightTheBite.com

###

MEDIA & PUBLIC RELATIONS
1600 PACIFIC HIGHWAY, ROOM 208 • SAN DIEGO, CA 92101